

[21 Icons Season 3] Laduma Ngxokolo

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"There is a science to what I do. It's about exploring heritage and turning it into something that people haven't seen before." - Laduma Ngxokolo

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Ngxokolo was selected for *21 Icons* South Africa Season 3 for using traditional Xhosa beadwork motifs and patterns, to celebrate the rich heritage of the Xhosa culture through providing traditional clothing for Xhosa initiation rituals.

In 2010 Ngxokolo officially established his knitwear range named MaXhosa. Inspired by the deeply rooted essence of the blanket in his culture, he has collaborated with Hinterveld to design a range of Mohair blankets that allows Xhosa pride to meet contemporary elegance. In the same year Ngxokolo won the South African national leg of the South African Society of Dyers and Colourists (SDC) Design Competition, which earned him a trip to London where he was awarded first prize internationally for the competition.

In 2014 Ngxokolo showed a collection for the first time at Mercedes-Benz Johannesburg Fashion Week, he won the Emerging Designer of the Year Award at the African Fashion International Awards, and was invited to present his work at the What Design Can Do conference in Amsterdam. A few months later, he was invited to showcase the collection at the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Berlin, which won him the Premium Emerging Designer Award for his menswear range. This led to him being invited to exhibit MaXhosa at the Premium exhibition in Berlin and Munich.

About the portrait

For the portrait *The Explorer*, Ngxokolo is photographed wearing his garments while seated on a white horse in the middle of Long Street in Cape Town. Playing on the idea of a rural boy delivering his wares to the city, the portrait delivers a striking blend of modern and traditional, and speaks to a generation navigating the combination of both.

View the video

About 21 Icons Season 3

The short film-series documents the conversations between Gary Van Wyk as the photographer and filmmaker and the icons. Each short film provides insight into both the subject and photographer's creative approach to the portrait.

Behind each portrait lies a carefully planned concept that captures not only the essence of each icon visually, but also in spirit and in terms of their unique legacy.

Season three of 21 ICONS South Africa is proudly sponsored by Mercedes-Benz South Africa.

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